maintained, not only the lines of sight match between the conference participant HM1 and the conference participant at the other side, but also the conference participant HM1 understands whom the other conference participants HM are directed to.

12. Example structure of each device

Fig. 68 shows an actual example device structure which can be used for the signal processing device SPD of each teleconference device TCD or the seating-order determination device GJD, in a teleconference system according to an embodiment of the present invention. These devices can be implemented, for example, by personal computers. The group-determination-table generating device like that shown in Fig. 47 can also be implemented by the following device structure.

The structure shown in Fig. 68 includes a CPU 100 for controlling each section; a ROM 101 for storing basic input and output systems (BIOS) and various initial values; a RAM 102 for tentatively storing various programs, data, and data obtained during calculation; a hard-disk drive (HDD) 104 for driving a hard disk for storing an operating system (OS), various application programs (computer programs), and other data; a removable-medium drive 105 for driving a removable medium 106, such as a CD-ROM, a CD-R, a CD-RW, a DVD-ROM, a DVD-RAM, a DVD-R, a DVD-RW, a removable hard disk, and a

semiconductor memory; and a communication interface section 103 for connecting to an external communication network (the communication network NT), such as an ISDN, a commercial telephone line, a cable-TV line, and a digital communication-satellite line, and for connecting to an external bus, such as that conforming to the IEEE-1394 standard or a USB, and to various external connection terminals.

The structure shown in Fig. 68 can further include, for example, an input operation device, such as a mouse or a keyboard, operated by the user and a monitor for displaying information, although they are not shown.

An application program for implementing the functions of the signal processing device SPD in the teleconference system according to the present embodiment described above, especially the attention-degree-information generating function in the attention-degree-information generating section JB1 and the information manipulation and distribution function in the information manipulation and distribution section PB, or the group determination processing, the seating-order determination processing, and the seating-order-information generating function is provided by the removable medium 106 or by communication through the communication interface section 103.

The application program provided by the removable

medium 106 or by the communication interface section 103 is stored in the hard disk of the HDD 104, is read from the hard disk of the HDD 104, and tentatively stored in the RAM 102. The CPU 100 executes various operations in the teleconference system according to the present embodiment according to the application program tentatively stored in the RAM 102.

Fig. 69 shows another example structure of the teleconference device TCD1.

In the example structure shown in Fig. 69, as display means for displaying images of conference participants HM2 to HMn in teleconference devices TCD2 to TCDn, the monitor devices MD2 to MDn, such as those shown in Fig. 2, corresponding to the teleconference devices TCD2 to TCDn (the conference participants HM2 to HMn) are not provided, but, for example, one bent screen 31 is provided and images are displayed on the screen 31, for example, by a projector.

In the example structure shown in Fig. 69, images of the conference participants HM2 to HMn are displayed on the screen 31 as if the conference participant HM1 and the other conference participants HM2 to HMn sat around a table for a conference.

A camera 34 and a microphone 35 are disposed, for example, at the front of the conference participant HM1. Image data of the conference participant HM1, captured by